

A Brief History and Overview of Instructional Materials in Utah

In 1907 the Utah State Legislature enacted a law creating the Utah State Textbook Commission thereby giving the jurisdiction for the choice of textbooks neither to the Utah State Board of Education nor the Utah State Legislature, but to a separate group of appointed educators and lay citizens. However, when the constitutional revision took place in 1987, the Utah State Textbook Commission was placed under the Utah State Board of Education to more properly align all of those working with education under one governing body. From the outset, making the choice of which instructional materials to use has been a large and arduous task, but has always helped to guarantee quality instructional materials for Utah's students. In 2001, the name was changed to the Utah State Instructional Materials Commission.

Instructional Materials Adoption Procedures

The purpose of state adoption procedures for instructional materials is to provide a listing of the best available instructional materials and to eliminate those that are undesirable or of inferior quality. All educational patrons are encouraged to use this list to make preliminary decisions about curriculum to be used in the schools.

Instructional materials mean textbooks or materials used as, or in place of, textbooks and which may be used within the state curriculum framework for courses of study by students in public schools to include: textbooks, workbooks, computer software, online or Internet courses, cd's and dvd's, and multiple forms of communication media. These materials shall be designed for student use, may be accompanied by or contain teaching guides and study helps, and shall appear on the online, searchable database (RIMS) of state-recommended instructional materials.

Instructional materials are considered for all curriculum content areas once a year. Official announcement of upcoming instructional materials reviews are sent to publishers in June and December. An intent to submit materials is made by the publisher and samples of each title are received by the Instructional Materials Center. These materials are evaluated by the Instructional Materials Advisory Committees and recommendations are then sent to the Utah State Instructional Materials Commission for their perusal during their semiannual adoption meetings. The recommendations are then sent to the State Board of Education for final approval.

The following advisory committees are currently functioning:

ACADEMIC COURSES	APPLIED TECHNOLOGY COURSES
Bilingual Education/ESL	Business
Character Education	Agricultural Science
Driver Education & Safety	Business Education
Early Childhood Education	Family & Consumer Science
Educational Technology	General Financial Literacy
Fine Arts	Health Science & Technology

Foreign Language	Horticulture
General Financial Literacy - 12th grade	Marketing Education
Health Education & Fitness	Natural Resources
Language Arts	Plant & Animal Science
Mathematics	Technology Education
Physical Education	Trade & Technical Education
Science	
Social Studies	
Special Education/Resource Materials	

Instructional materials are adopted for a five-year period. School districts are requested to discontinue, at the earliest possible date, the use of instructional materials which have expired from the recommended instructional materials list (RIMs).

Districts are encouraged to use funds designated for state instructional materials for materials on the recommended instructional materials list, or for advanced placement, International Baccalaureate, concurrent enrollment, and college-level course materials. Use of these materials may require parental permission consistent with R277-474.

Responsibilities and Functions

With the statute change in 1987, the responsibility for the adoption of instructional materials at the state level changed to accommodate the law. The following responsibilities rest with the Utah State Board of Education (refer to Utah Code, Chapter 53A-14-101-106):

1. Recommend instructional materials for public schools after receiving adoption recommendations from the Utah State Instructional Materials Commission.
2. Award contracts for instructional materials to instructional materials publishers.
3. Set policies for instructional materials adoption procedures after receiving recommendations from the Utah State Instructional Materials Commission.
4. Appoint members of the Utah State Instructional Materials Commission and set the term of office of each member.

The Utah State Instructional Materials Commission has these responsibilities:

1. Review instructional materials and make recommendations to the Utah State Board of Education.
2. Accept proposals (bids) from publishers for instructional materials to be state adopted.
3. Appoint Instructional Materials Advisory Committees to evaluate instructional materials.
4. Recommend policies for instructional materials adoption procedures to the State Board of Education.
5. Review requests for renegotiation of instructional materials contracts and requests for instructional materials to be removed from contract.

Membership and Terms of Office of the Utah State Instructional Materials Commission

The members of the Instructional Materials Commission are appointed by the Utah State Board of Education to serve one four-year term. The membership of the Instructional Materials Commission shall be as follows:

1. The state superintendent of public instruction, or the superintendent's designee;
2. The dean of the college of education of one of the state owned schools on a rotating basis;
3. One school district superintendent;
4. One secondary school principal;
5. One secondary school teacher;
6. One elementary school principal;
7. One elementary school teacher;
8. Five persons not employed in public education.

The Instructional Materials Adoption Process in Utah maintains local autonomy in the choice of instructional materials by providing a general list of approved materials. The adoption process also establishes, by contracting with each publisher, a price for instructional materials to be maintained throughout the adoption period, thus providing equality in cost for each school district. This system provides valuable information to all education agencies about the best instructional materials at the lowest price for Utah's students. While schools and districts are not required to select materials from this list, most, if not all, find it a great aid in finding worthwhile resources for instruction and learning. The Utah State Board of Education affirmed its support of the process in a resolution establishing its official position regarding local control of curriculum that was passed in July of 2014.